

GENERAL KELLEY'S DEPARTMENT.

Capture of a Rebel Official Document Detailing the Recent Plans of General Early.

THE AFFAIR AT JONESTOWN.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad All Right.

Working of the Amnesty Proclamation.

The Recent Raid Upon Petersburg.

Description of the Place and Its Defences.

The Excitement in Cumberland and Patriotism of the Citizens.

General Kelley's Official Report to Governor Boreman.

Despatch from General Kelley to Gov. A. J. Boreman.

A despatch just received from Colonel Thoburn, commanding at Petersburg, informs me that the rebel force threatening him for several days past has retreated towards the Shenandoah valley. The force was a formidable one, consisting of three brigades—Lee's, Walker's and Rorer's—all under the command of General Fitzhugh Lee.

Deserters report that it was the intention of Lee to capture the railroad at Petersburg, take New Creek and Cumberland, destroy our stores, and break the railroad by burning the bridge, &c., &c.

I am happy to inform you that the great raid undertaken by General Early, in retaliation for our late movements in this department, has thus far resulted in a complete failure or fizzle. An empty wagon train of Col. Thoburn's, returning from Petersburg, was captured by a portion of the enemy's forces. With this exception they have not thus far been able to inflict upon us any injury. Many deserters are coming in, and our cavalry are picking up many stragglers.

The railroad is safe and trains are running regularly. The weather is cold and the snow is several inches deep.

Our New Creek Correspondence.

For some time past we have been in receipt of information of various rebel movements, all tending to show that the late successful raid of General Early on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad has aroused the rebels to a course of action intended to indemnify them for their late losses. The stories told by these prisoners are conflicting. Some say they are not considered reliable enough for publication; but from what all of them say it is evident that our late raid not merely alarmed, but aroused the rebels to much exertion to prevent a similar occurrence. After being driven out of Winchester, Imboden fell back to Kearnsport, in the neighborhood of which place he was supposed to be this morning. Colonel Boyd, in command of a cavalry brigade, was still in search of the fugitives at last accounts. In the charge after Imboden yesterday, the First New York cavalry was engaged, and gave him a long and rapid chase.

The enemy yesterday captured a train of ours, when about six or eight miles this side of Petersburg. The train was taken to New Creek, almost empty. The attack was made on the train just seventy-five miles from the junction of the Petersburg and Norfolk and Albany pikes. A large portion of the guard escaped; but the enemy obtained possession of about thirty-five wagons.

General Kelley has given orders that the works at Petersburg are to be defended as the place might be defended at all hazards, and until such time as reinforcements can cut their way in.

It is situated about eleven miles from Moorefield, the county seat of Hardy county, on the south branch of the Potomac river. It is near the celebrated gap in the Patterson creek mountains, called the Potomac gap. Before the war it was a small place, but since the war it has become a place of some importance. At the present time the place is as desolate as a waste of land. At one time it boasted of three stores, a saloon, a hotel, a village blacksmith, a tannery and two hotels, where the big game (deer) was hunted. The town is situated on the south side of a hill rising from the water, and the position, in a military point of view, is considered as one affording opportunity for a strong defense. There are some buildings that overlook the town. These we have fortified. The country is open for some considerable distance around the town.

which runs at the base of the hill, is from two hundred and fifty to three hundred feet wide. It is not very deep, but exceedingly rapid. The bed of the river is very rocky.

It is a small town of (before the war) two hundred inhabitants, and very well built. There were many substantial brick houses with iron roofs here. It has good public buildings and a hotel. It is situated in the midst of a valley fifteen miles long, and from an average, three miles wide. The valley contains some of the richest land in the State. Nearly all the land here is substantially built and pleasantly located. The valley is bounded in the north by the Patterson creek mountains, and in the south by the Shenandoah valley. It is a fertile and beautiful country. This was the great cattle raising country of Virginia. The land was divided into small farms, each of which raised from five to ten hundred and fifty dollars per acre. It raised about half a million of cattle, which were taken to feeding cattle pens for sale. The cattle were great and their number in the character of their sports. In the town, the many there in its neighborhood, has changed and suffered more since the commencement of the war.

Mr. Theodore C. Williams, Despatch.

CUMBERLAND, Md., Jan. 4.—(N.Y. T.)

The latest news we have received up to this time shows the enemy—Rorer's command, or a portion of it—has been at Burlington, on Patterson creek,

this afternoon. Scouts coming in bring intelligence which leaves the impression that New Creek or Cumberland will be threatened, if not actually attacked. That such should be the case does not seem strange. It is not at all unlikely that the enemy will make a demonstration on several points, for the purpose of diverting attention from the beleaguered garrison at Petersburg, as also to prevent, if possible, reinforcements from being sent to its aid.

From all the reports that reach us it seems that the rebel force is advancing in three main columns, and apparently marching towards points enabling them to concentrate in the direction of New Creek. Now this may be so; but all these movements must be looked upon with great suspicion, because it is not at all uncommon for a mounted men to be sent out on a scout, and report themselves as the extreme advance of a heavy column of troops. It is plainly evident that the intention of the enemy is to confuse us as much as possible with regard to the direction of his main movements. In this matter it is very probable we are not much deceived.

A prisoner whom we took stated that the rebels were sent out to cut the railroad of the Baltimore and Ohio line, to prevent General Grant from sending reinforcements to General Meade, it having been reported that General Hooker was retreating with his command to the Army of the Potomac. On questioning the prisoner closely, it was evident that he did not know much about the movements of the rebels; but he knew this much: that troops had arrived at Lynchburg from Longstreet's corps. Can it be that the present demonstrations against General Kelley are made for the purpose of covering a runaway movement from General Foster?

CUMBERLAND, Md., Jan. 4.—(N.Y. T.)

The excitement in Cumberland is tonight is tolerably great. There is a great deal of expectancy—of many things. Many of the storekeepers are prudently taking care of their valuables.

It has been snowing all day, and now the ground is thickly covered with the "fleece white." Notwithstanding the unusual state of military affairs, the citizens look on with calmness and joyous pride, while the snow bids fair to serve us on the principle of the wonderful gourd before morning.

CUMBERLAND is one hundred and eighty miles from Baltimore, the capital of Maryland, and is situated on the great National Road to the Western States. It is peculiarly situated, with great mountains on every side, containing vast beds of superior bituminous coal, much of which is mined by New York capital, and consumed by ocean steamers and manufacturing at the East. The population of Cumberland is about ten thousand.

For prudential reasons the passenger trains were stopped from running to-night. The eastward bound train from Wheeling was stopped at Piedmont, a place located one hundred and seven miles from Baltimore. Piedmont, as its name implies, is at the "foot of the mountain." It is the dividing line between the second and third divisions of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It owes its origin and rapid growth entirely to the railroad. Piedmont is distant seventeen miles from Altoona, the latter place being two hundred and twenty-four miles from Baltimore. Altoona, at the "top of the mountain," is two thousand seven hundred feet above Baltimore—the greatest railway altitude in the United States. The ascent of the grade (though imperceptible from its ease and safety) is one of the boldest and grandest scenes of combined art and nature to be found anywhere in this country.

If Cumberland should be attacked General Kelley has determined to defend it to the last extremity.

The citizens are not nearly as much excited over these movements as I have observed them on similar occasions in other parts of the country.

CUMBERLAND, Md., Jan. 5.—(N.Y. T.)

The town this morning has active activity. Reinforcements are arriving. They look like carloads of theatre ghosts as they come in sight, so thickly is the snow distributed upon their uniforms. General Kelley feels confident in his ability to hold this place. Fitzhugh Lee has under his immediate command three regiments of rebel cavalry, two regiments of infantry and nine pieces of artillery.

Major Kearns, the commander of this post, has accepted military service and holds them in readiness to be used to defend exposed points.

The streets are thickly covered with snow, and notwithstanding the activity prevalent among the military the citizens are all out with sleighs and bells, enjoying the pleasure of a quick, smooth slide, now that the opportunity offers for the enjoyment of so favorable an outdoor amusement.

The incoming troops are of course without tents, and hence it is that shelter must be provided at once for those kept in reserve. To this end—the troops from the falling snow, and stores, church bells, and public buildings are being rapidly turned into military quarters. The soldiers are in the best of spirits, and seem anxious for a fight.

The rebels continue to move in a manner intended to mislead us as to their real intentions, while it is quite likely that they have discovered we are retreating the complicity, by perceiving them as to the nature of our own movements. Of course it is a "diamond cut diamond" affair. Each party is cautious, but active beyond an ordinary degree.

CUMBERLAND, Md., Dec. 5.—(N.Y. T.)

Colonel Mulligan, commander of New Creek, reports that a rebel picket was stationed at Ridgeville, a small place situated in Hampshire county, in a very mountainous district of the country, and at a point between eight and nine miles from New Creek.

This afternoon the snow continues to fall fast and heavily. It is beyond question that this snow storm will very seriously affect the rebel movements.

Having now made all possible preparation to defend the threatened points, scouts in force have been sent out to discover the whereabouts, just at this time, of the rebel columns, while other parties have been dispatched to give the rebels an invitation to take up their beds and go to other words, to compel them to fight or fall back.

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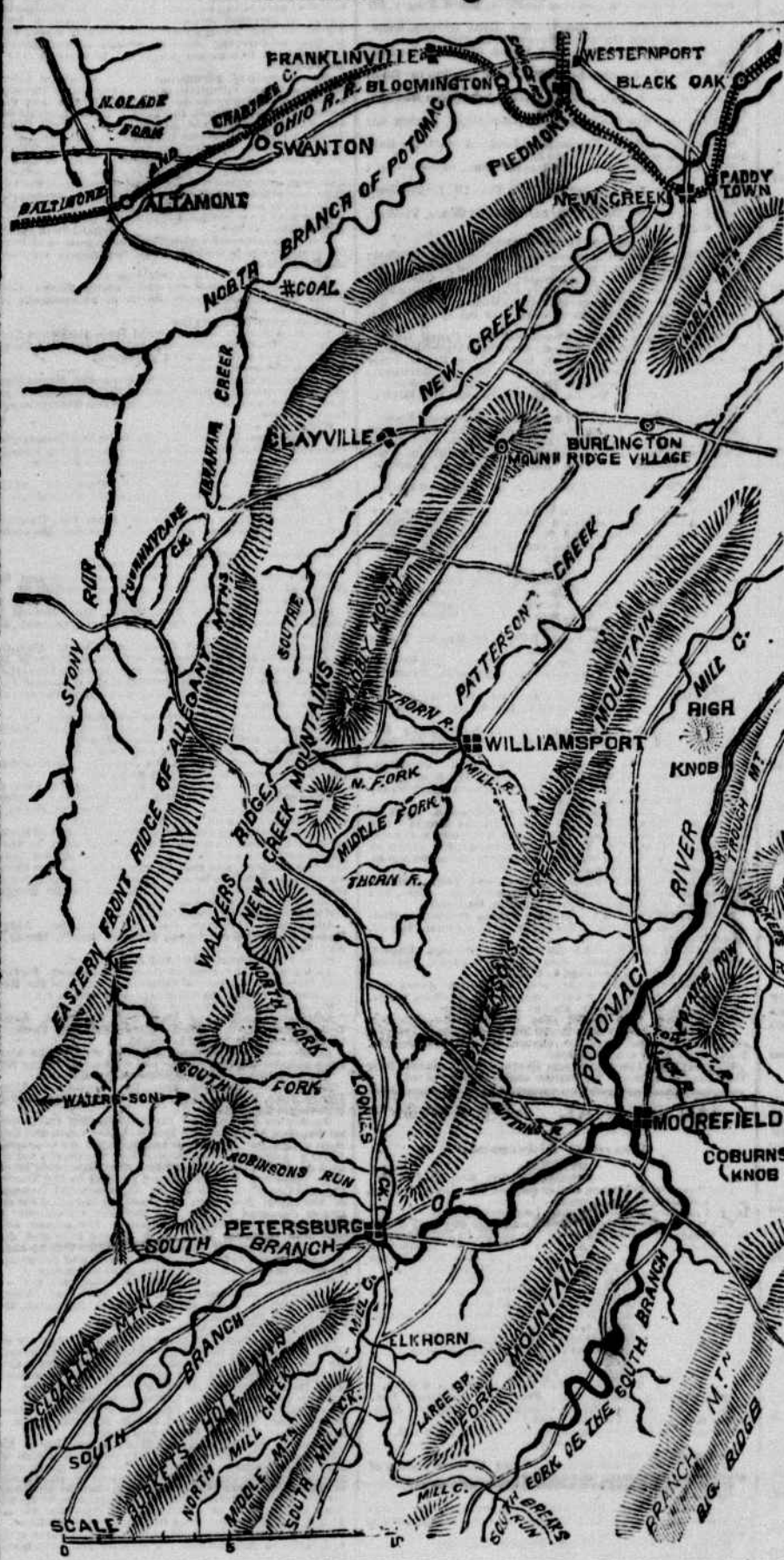
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GENERAL EARLY'S FAILURE.

Scene of the Recent Rebel Failure in Western Virginia.



get to them the promised reinforcements, with artillery, &c. This is what the official rebel document says in regard to the late movements and the different plans adopted.

We have also become possessed of very important information in regard to the strength and position of the rebel commands and the avowed intentions of several rebel officers high in position.

A report is in circulation relative to the capture of the garrison at Jonestown, West Virginia, leaving the inference that the commander of the Department of West Virginia is responsible for our loss at that place. Such is not the fact. The command thus captured was within the limits of General Foster's department.

The weather continues very cold here and the sleighing is good.

We are daily in receipt of favorable evidence in regard to the effect of the amnesty proclamation among the rebel soldiers. Deserters from almost all the rebel commands enter our lines, bringing information of sometimes the highest importance. They take the oath of allegiance, and then, instead of becoming a burden to the government, are usefully employed to the public benefit. Every opportunity is afforded them to avoid the chances of capture by rebel raiders.

The question is asked, why did not General Kelley follow up the rebels when they commenced to retreat? This question can be briefly and satisfactorily answered thus: The very elements that interfered with the rebel movements also retarded our own, and prevented us from inflicting that injury on the raiders that we otherwise could have done. The effort was made to follow them up, and our cavalry did attack the rear of one of the enemy's columns, picking up stragglers and the flag; but on a careful consideration of the whole facts of the case it was found that a general movement at that time would have been hazardous in the extreme, from uncontrollable physical causes, besides entailing fatal effects to a large number of men and horses from the severe state of the weather. Besides, what would have been gained? Even conceding the fact that our plans would have been entirely successful, the result attained would not have been anywhere near an equivalent for the losses, from the effect of the weather and other causes, that we should have necessarily been compelled to sustain. General Fitzhugh Lee at one time believed his object to have been secured effectually, and gave out that he had captured the garrison at Petersburg, and that he would certainly get into Cumberland or New Creek on the following day.

Our Washington Despatch.

Washington, Jan. 6, 1864.

No official information has been received here of the reported raid in the vicinity of Cumberland, Md., and it is believed here that it is merely a scare caused by the movements of one or two small parties of rebel cavalry in the Shenandoah valley.

The Press Despatches.

Baltimore, Md., Jan. 6, 1864.

Notable information from Cumberland, Md., the morning says there are no rebels in that vicinity.

They have retreated from the vicinity of Petersburg and gone in the direction of Staunton.

All is quiet along the whole line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and trains are running regularly.

Washington, Jan. 6.—(N.Y. T.)

It was stated more than a week ago that the rebels were moving towards Winchester, with an intention probably of proceeding beyond that town.

This report is now verified.

The government, it is merely necessary to say, has not been unmindful of this important fact, and has taken measures accordingly.

Washington, Jan. 6.—(N.Y. T.)

Some receipt of the newspaper telegram early this morning announcing the appearance of Fitzhugh Lee and Imboden with a rebel force, in those columns, threatening Petersburg and Cumberland, the Star says a despatch

THE CASE OF THE CHESAPEAKE.

The Judge of the Halifax Admiralty Court Declares Her Seizure Piracy.

The Advocate General in Favor of Restoring Her to Her Owners.

HALFAX, N. S., Jan. 9, 1864.

Admiralty Court, Hon. Judge Stuart, C.B., presiding. Hon. J. W. Johnston, Advocate General for the crown. W. A. D. Morse, Esq., counsel for the owners of the Chesapeake. J. W. Ritchie, Esq., counsel for the Confederates.

In opening the Chesapeake case the Judge stated that the cause was entertained upon the ground that the seizure of the vessel was a piratical act. His opinion was that the vessel ought to be given up to her owners.

Mr. Ritchie asked the Judge to contemplate the probability of an application of the Confederates for her. His Honor declared he would not entertain anything of the kind.

Mr. Ritchie then gave his interpretation of the law upon the validity of the seizure, contending that any citizen of the Southern confederacy, with or without a commission, has an absolute right to seize any vessel belonging to the federalists, and it would be a lawful prize.

The Advocate General said that he felt some difficulty in bringing the case into this court, as there was a pretence of her being a lawful prize. But there was no evidence that the capture was piracy. His opinion was that the vessel should be delivered over to her owners.

Adjourned to the 13th instant.

THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

Mr. William Young's Despatch.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, WASHINGTON, Jan. 9, 1864.

REPORTED CHANGES IN THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY.

It is reported to-day that General Hancock, of the Second army corps, has been relieved and ordered to report at Washington, and that General Warren has been ordered from New York to resume the command of the Second corps. This is coupled with another rumor that General Meade will resign, and that General Hancock will succeed him in the command of the Army of the Potomac.

Colonel Morrow's Command.

Colonel Morrow, of the Twenty-fourth Michigan regiment, is now in command of the First brigade, First division, First army corps.

THE WEATHER.

The weather last night was very cold, but it is milder to-day, though the snow does not diminish. It is not, however, inconveniently deep.

GENERAL MEADE'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

General Meade went to Washington this morning on a special train.

FAST RAILROAD TRAVELLING.

The ordinary rate of speed on the railroad to Alexandria is twelve miles an hour; but a party of officers were rushed over a short piece of the road, one evening lately; six miles in seven minutes. They held their breath and their hair.

News from Fortress Monroe.

Fortress Monroe, Jan. 9, 1864.

Joseph Boxer and — Brashard, of the New York Mounted Rifles, escaped from the Yorktown Jan. 8, and on the night of December 20. The former was captured by our pickets above Yorktown, and the latter came in and gave himself up last evening, saying he had been cut on a raid.

Fortress Monroe, Jan. 9, 1864.

Major General Butler returned to Fortress Monroe last evening.

All vessels reported to have arrived here during the past week sailed this forenoon. Wind northwest.

The engineer and two firemen who were captured from the Star of the West, and who escaped from the Richmond prison, arrived here to-day.

Daring Robberies in Loudon County, Va.

Washington, Jan. 9, 1864.

A letter from Loudon county, Virginia, states that daring robberies are being everywhere committed and money extorted from the inhabitants to save their dwellings from conflagration.

There is a greater state of alarm prevailing than has existed before during the war.

The depredations are represented to be committed by Southern deserters. There being no protection afforded them, the citizens are compelled to submit.

The Ship Tonquin Burned by a Rebel Sailing Vessel.

Portland, Jan. 9, 1864.

The ship Tonquin, Dupont, for Havre, was burned by a rebel sailing vessel, October 26, in latitude ten degrees south, longitude thirty-two degrees west.

There is no American ship Tonquin, and the vessel reported burned may be the ship Tonquin, of Boston, Capt. Hoyt, from the coast of Sumatra, with a cargo of pepper, bound to Pernambuco for orders.

Pernambuco is in latitude eight degrees thirteen minutes south, longitude thirty-five degrees five minutes west.

(Our latest European news reports the arrival of the ship Tonkin, Captain Dupont, at Havre, which vessel reported having been boarded by a rebel sailing vessel of an "ten degrees south," from which statement the above is undoubtedly fabricated.—See Herald.)

Movements of European Steamers.

THE STEAMSHIP AFRICA LEAVES BOSTON.

Boston, Jan. 9, 1864.

The steamship Africa, from Halifax, is below, but in consequence of there being so much fog about she will not come up to port until daylight.

ARRIVAL OF THE BOHEMIAN AT PORTLAND.

Portland, Jan. 9, 1864.

The steamship Bohemian, Captain Burland, from Liverpool December 24, via Londonderry 26, arrived at the port at half-past seven o'clock this morning. Her arrival has been anticipated by the Africa at Halifax.

THE NEW YORK INWARD BOUND.

HALF-PAST SEVEN, JAN. 9, 1864.

The steamship New York, from Southampton, which put in here short of coal, sailed for New York at nine o'clock last night.

Escape of a Union Soldier from the Rebel Ranks.

HE IS IMPRISONED, GETS FREE, AND IS HUNTED WITH BLOODHOUNDS.

D. A. Edsall, an intelligent young soldier belonging to the Twenty-second regiment of New York State Volunteers, is now in this city, after having accomplished a series of extraordinary escapes from the rebel army. He was taken by the rebels at Meridian Station, Mississippi, on the 23d of July last, and taken to Savannah, Georgia. While on his way to that city he made his escape from his guard twice. He was immediately chased with bloodhounds, which the rebels employ to catch both negroes and Yankee deserters. He was rescued and placed in barracks in Savannah. From this place he made his escape, and was again captured by Captain Bradford, son of Governor Bradford, of Maryland. He was then placed in Savannah jail, in a cell six by four in extent and eight feet high. He was with four others, employed in cleaning out the cell. His food was one meal a day, consisting of one-quarter pound of beef and a bit of "corn dodger" bread, which the negroes, being friendly to them, knowing them to be Yankees, sent them.

When an attack on Savannah was threatened, Edsall, with many of the Union prisoners, was taken to Atlanta. He was in Atlanta for two weeks, and while there, on the 10th of December, about four hundred prisoners from the army of Gen. Burnside were brought in, nearly all of them Yankees. Edsall was among them. He was immediately released from the swamp by negroes to Smithville, N. C. This was his fourth and last escape. He was sent on to Hampton Roads in the steamer James A. Smith, from Beaufort, N. C. There he was liberated. Edsall arrived in New York on Saturday, the 2d inst.

Edsall is guarded by about two thousand men. He is not strong, and, in his opinion, two of our Southern comrade take it.